

Minutes of the Yardley Hastings Parish Council

Wednesday 2nd September 2020, at 7.30pm, by "Zoom Video"

(On 4th April 2020 Parliament passed "The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020" authorising local councils to hold their meetings by means of video-conferencing, allowing remote access and participation by Council members and members of the public.).

Participating: Mr H. Cave, (*Chairman*), Ms D. Smith and Messrs R. Houghton, J. Quilter, C. Pickering, A. Rowton and J. Keggin.

Clerk: Mr G. Gill Public: None

Councillors: Michael Clarke (*left 8.15pm*) and Steven Hollowell.

56./20 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms L Davis and Messrs J. Grant, D. Winter and M. Cooke. These were approved. Apologies were also received from Councillor Carole Clarke.

57./20 District and County Councillors' Reports

Councillor Michael Clarke referred to the recent temporary closure of the Greencore sandwich making factory in Northampton, as a result of a spike in the number of their employees having been tested positive for Covid 19. Northampton Borough was now being watched very carefully by Public Health England. The management of the Coronavirus emergency had been very much the responsibility of the NCC (in conjunction with Public Health England), but the support system which it had been organising for vulnerable people was now being wound down. Hopefully local networks would now pick up where the NCC had left off. Central Government had refunded the NCC a sum of £35m – what it had cost the NCC to carry out its extra work in managing the emergency in Northamptonshire. The Shadow Authority for West Northamptonshire had appointed Anna Earnshaw as the first chief executive for the new council. She was currently the Director of Adult Services for the NCC. The NCC were projecting that it would have a reserve of c. £40m on 31st March 2021, and this would be split between the two successor unitary authorities. Shadow arrangements were being put in place to ensure a smooth transmission in the management of public services. This would involve a significant amount of work.

Councillor Steven Hollowell referred to his written report which he had circulated in advance of the meeting. The South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 had been formally adopted by Full Council on the 22nd July. It replaced the Saved Policies from the previous plan and had become part of the Development Plan for South Northamptonshire. It was already in use and included several completely new planning concepts. As well as a "Self-Build policy" there were several other housing policies including accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People.

At the national level there were currently many temporary changes being introduced to the planning system arising from the Covid epidemic. Most of these had a time limiting clause which could none the less be extended if necessary. Apart from these, there were other, more fundamental changes being proposed to the planning system and central government had issued a white paper, "Planning for the Future" for consultation. He had worked through this and produced a draft response. Officers at the SNC were also working on submitting a response on behalf of the Council as a whole. One disappointing aspect of the government's plans was that

they were expecting new local plans to be drawn up within three years, with the expectation that such plans should be web-based with interactive maps. If the constituent authorities of the new West Northamptonshire Council had not already just adopted new local plans, West Northamptonshire would only have been given thirty months to come up with another new one. Councillor Hollowell said he would circulate his draft response to the “Planning for the Future” consultation (which did not close until the end of October), in order to inform the Parish Council’s own response (to be determined at its October meeting).

58./20 Members’ Declarations of Interest for items on the Agenda

None.

59./20 Approval of Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held 20th July 2020

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Ms D. Smith, seconded by Mr C. Pickering, and signed by the Chairman.

60./20 Matters arising from Minutes

(Item 54./20) The Clerk observed that Gigaclear had completed their ducting works in Chase Park Road, but that the agreed relocation of the green boxes in Northampton Road remained outstanding. This additional work would probably require a fresh permit from the local highway authority. Mr R. Houghton reported that Gigaclear’s workmen had deposited some excavated material in the culvert on the north side of Chase Park Road adjacent to No. 74, which if it was not removed might give rise to some flooding of the carriageway.

61./20 Finance

(a) Review of (i) Clerk’s remuneration (hourly rate) and (ii) Clerk’s contracted hours

Mr J. Quilter apologised that the Clerk’s appraisal, due in August, had not yet happened. It was therefore agreed to postpone consideration of this item until the next meeting. However it was noted that following the recent conclusion of the national pay negotiations for Local Government employees the hourly rate of pay applicable to point 14 (old point 23) on the pay scale had been increased to £12.00 with effect from 1st April 2020.

(b) Purchase of a Poppy Wreath

On the proposal of Mr R. Houghton seconded by Ms D. Smith it was agreed that the Council should spend up to £25 on the purchase of a poppy wreath (pursuant to the power granted by S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972).

(c) Report of payments made since the Council Meeting held on 20th July pursuant to Minute 7./20(g)

SSE	Street Lighting - July	NET: £109.74 VAT: £5.48	115.22
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(d) Payment of accounts received

Terry Watton	Handyman 01/08/20 – 31/08/20		267.00
Brown & Barden	Grass cutting in Rec – 2 cuts in August	NET: £170.00 VAT: £34.00	204.00
RGS Arboricultural Consultants	Tree Inspection Report	NET: £495.00 VAT: £99.00	594.00
G. Gill	Clerk’s remuneration – August		281.75
The Play Inspection Company Ltd	Annual Inspection of the Recreation Ground	NET: £105.00 VAT: £21.00	126.00

South Northants Area Support Team	Annual Subscription		20.00
SSE	Street Lighting - August	NET: £97.16 VAT: £4.85	102.01*

*Not to be paid until receipt of invoice

Mr A. Rowton proposed, Mr J. Quilter seconded, and it was agreed that the above accounts be paid. The Chairman then signed the cheques to give effect to the above payments, having confirmed that these cheques had already been written and signed by the Clerk. It was agreed that the cheques could be signed subsequently by one of the other Councillors mandated to sign the Council's cheques, notwithstanding the provisions of Section F6 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Action: Clerk

62./20 Report of RGS Arboricultural Consultants on the condition of the Council's trees

It was noted that the report recommended a number of "low" and "medium priority" items of work, but no items of "high priority". Councillors also noted the contents of a quote received from Matthew George for the entirety of the work recommended by RGS. In view of the size of this quote, and in order to satisfy the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulation 11.1(b), the Clerk was asked to obtain additional quotes from two other tree surgeons. He was also asked to go back to Matthew George and ask him to itemise his quote.

Action: Clerk

63./20 Compliance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications)

Accessibility Regulations 2018

The Clerk reported that on 24th August 2Commune Ltd had posted a Notice on its hosted websites to remind their clients of the need to comply with the above regulations by 23rd September 2020. The Notice recommended that their clients should follow the guidance contained in the recent NALC publication "Website Accessibility Requirements", and test their individual websites using a free downloadable accessibility testing tool. The Notice also contained an assurance by 2Commune that it had for its part used the tool to test the basic framework of its generic UKLC website and that it did pass the required technical tests. However they had not tested each of their clients' websites individually, and this was something that each of its clients needed to do for themselves. They were however offering to conduct full accessibility tests on individual clients' websites for a fixed fee of £350.00 +VAT.

The Clerk expressed his regret that he had not previously been made aware of the NALC publication and that he had only started to address the issues raised by 2Communes's Notice earlier in the day. It had become apparent to him that there could potentially be a significant amount of work involved in testing whether the Council's website was indeed compliant (hence the size of 2Commune's proposed fee for this work). However the indications were that the Council's website was already substantially compliant. The Chairman observed that in his opinion this was indeed almost certainly the case. The Clerk quoted from the NALC publication: "the key is to be moving towards full compliance. The speed at which this happens will depend on the resources of the council in question. It will be an ongoing process", and: "At the least, councils should have a plan of action and an accessibility statement in place by 23rd September". The Clerk said that he would now familiarise himself further with the guidance contained in the NALC publication and in 2Commune's manual with a view to bringing a fuller report to the next meeting. It would be helpful if Councillors could also read the publication in advance of the next meeting, in order that a plan of action could be agreed at that meeting.

Action: Clerk

64./20 To consider proposing resolutions for consideration by the Northants CALC AGM

There were no proposals.

65./20 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that the only item of correspondence which required a response was an invitation to attend the NorthantsCALC AGM. The meeting was being held virtually on “Zoom”. It was agreed that Mr H. Cave would represent the Council as its voting delegate. **Action: Clerk**

66./20 Emergency Plan – Report from the working party

Ms D. Smith said that the “Yardley Helping Yardley” volunteer scheme was gradually winding down, which meant that there was now some capacity to get on with the next stage of formulating an Emergency Plan. This would involve leafleting households in the village to ask what skills/resources were available in the village and could be called upon in the event of an emergency situation arising. Back in February the working party had submitted an application to join the NCC’s “Community Resilience Pathfinder” scheme, (*see items 221./19 and 245./19*) and they had now at long last received an acknowledgement of receipt of their application.

67./20 Dog-fouling and other litter

Ms D. Smith reported that one suggestion which had come out of the YHY volunteer scheme was that volunteers might be employed in litter picking. However if this activity were to be organised under the aegis of the Parish Council it raised the question (1) whether the Parish Council might be held legally responsible for the actions of these volunteers whilst litter-picking, (or for any personal injury occasioned to the volunteers themselves), and (2) if so, whether any consequential financial liability would be covered by the Council’s insurance policy. It was suggested that the legal status of volunteers carrying out activities under the aegis of the Parish Council might be equivalent to the legal status of employees. The Clerk said he would investigate the true legal position. **Action: Clerk**

68./20 Village Sewerage system

It was noted that since the previous meeting there had not been any heavy rainfall sufficient to cause any sewage overflows. The Clerk observed that there had not in fact been any sewage overflows since the work which Anglian Water had carried out in November 2019 at the instigation of Mr M. Cooke (*see Item 200./19*).

69./20 Recreation Ground

(a) Annual Inspection Report

Councillors noted the contents of the inspection report received from the Play Inspection Company. The report recommended the urgent removal of much of the wooden play equipment on site, owing to rot having severely affected the structural strength of many of the constituent timbers. A number of Councillors volunteered to form a working party to carry out the removal of the affected equipment. Ms D. Smith proposed that an article should be included in the September edition of the Village Newsletter to explain why the Parish Council were taking this action. This was agreed. It was noted that hopefully the Newsletter would be ready for distribution on Friday 11th September. It was provisionally agreed that the working party should take place during the weekend 12th-13th September. Ms D. Smith said that she and Mr J. Quilter had decided to delay sending the proposed letter to Lord Northampton (*Item 27./20*) until the

beginning of October, by which time all the “condemned” play equipment should have been removed off site. They would circulate a draft for approval beforehand, and they were proposing that when sent to Lord Northampton it should be accompanied by a copy of the Inspection Report. **Action: Ms D. Smith and Mr J. Quilter**

(b) Need for repairs

The Clerk reported that Terry Watton’s latest inspection report was clear.

70./20 Employment of Community Payback team

It was noted that the Team’s visits to the village were still suspended.

71./20 Highways

It was noted that although Anglian Water had rectified the part of the “failed reinstatement” on the southern half of the carriageway in Bedford Road East they had yet to return to complete the work on the northern half of the carriageway. The Clerk said he would report the issue to “Fix my Street”. (see items 28./20 and 49./20). It was probably a “permit” issue. **Action: Clerk**

Mr R. Houghton observed that the broken railings against the brook in Chase Park Road and High Street had still not been repaired, despite having been reported some twelve months previously. The Clerk said he would report this issue as well to “Fix my Street”. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that the carriageway of the A428 (Northampton Road) was still prone to flooding across half its width in periods of moderately heavy rainfall. The Chairman observed that there seemed to be a serious problem with the roadside gullies at the lowest point, and the Clerk observed that the issue was difficult to report to “Fix my Street” since the only on-line reporting option available was to report a “blocked/damaged drain”. The standard response to this was that the drain in question was put on the schedule for routine cleaning. The reporting of actual and “current” flooding could only be done by phone (as an “emergency”), and experience showed that this only resulted in temporary flood warning notices being put up. He would write to Helen Howard, NCC Highways’ Community Liaison Officer. **Action: Clerk**

72./20 Police and Neighbourhood Watch

Mr R. Houghton reported there had been two thefts from properties in The Square. Another incident, the theft of a gun cabinet and its contents from a property on the outskirts of the village, appeared to have been well planned in advance. The Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp group had worked well to circulate information about these incidents. The SNAAG AGM would be taking place (by Zoom) on 29th September.

73./20 Pocket Park and Millennium Triangle

Ms D. Smith said that nothing had been done on the Millennium Triangle since the previous meeting. More work would be done in the Autumn.

74./20 Street Lighting

No faults had been reported additional to the fault to lantern No 18 in Northampton Road.

75./20 Planning Applications

- a) S/2020/1292/FUL New boundary wall, new outhouse, parking resurface, fenestration changes, roof-lights to the rear and front elevation and porch - 2 Gees Farm Close

It was agreed that the Council had no objection to the proposed development. **Action: Clerk**

(Item 53./20)The Clerk confirmed that immediately following the previous meeting he had notified the SNC's Enforcement Officer of the Council's concerns re: the recently erected carport over the driveway of 10 Northampton Road. The Enforcement Officer had replied to the effect that the carport was considered to be a building that had been erected forward of the principal elevation of a dwelling-house, which did not fall within the parameters of Permitted Development. As such, a letter had been forwarded for the attention of the owner of the property, inviting the submission of a retrospective application for planning permission

76./20 Councillors' Reports and Concerns

Mr J. Quilter reported that he had received a number of complaints from residents about the current state of the play equipment in the Recreation Ground, and had had to respond to the effect that the Council was doing all it could with a view to achieving its replacement. He had also received a number of complaints about the removal of the tree adjacent to the front wall of the Memorial Hall, and had had to explain that this had been done at the request of the Memorial Hall's insurers, following an incidence of subsidence at the North Western corner of the building. A number of residents had asked him whether the Village Bonfire and firework display would be taking place this year. The Chairman observed that the current restrictions on social gathering would prevent the event from taking place, and Ms D. Smith, representing the Memorial Hall Committee, confirmed that the Memorial Hall were not currently allowed to host such an event. There was no other suitable location in the village for the event to be held, and the cancellation of the event would be publicised in the September edition of the Village Newsletter.

Mr R. Houghton observed that a blue VW Golf (legally taxed) was permanently parked adjacent to the Millennium triangle in the space habitually occupied by the Wong's mobile Chinese takeaway van on Friday evenings. The car was moved immediately before the van arrived, and moved back again to the same spot immediately after the van's departure. The Clerk said he would have a conversation with the officers at the SNC responsible for the licensing of mobile takeaways to establish whether this activity might be in breach of the terms of Wong's licence. **Action: Clerk**

Ms D. Smith said that she had been approached by some volunteers who were keen to give the phone box opposite the school a fresh coat of paint. The Clerk said he would seek permission from BT. It was suggested that BT might even supply the appropriate paint. **Action: Clerk**

Ms D. Smith said that it appeared that some local residents might be using the Parish Council's litter bins in which to deposit rubbish cleared out of their vehicles. The Parish Council's litter bins were never intended to serve this purpose, and she would include an appropriate note in the Village Newsletter requesting that this activity be discontinued. **Action: Ms D. Smith**

Ms D. Smith said that she had received a request from the proprietor of "The Pudding Parlour" that the Parish Council should encourage local residents not to park permanently in the "hammerhead" by the Millennium Triangle. She had replied to the effect that such parking was entirely legal and that there was nothing that the Parish Council could do about it. It was noted that the proprietor was in fact in the habit of putting out a sign requesting that parking spaces be left available "For customers only".

77./20 Future Meeting Dates

Tuesday 6th October and Tuesday 3rd November